

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Attitude of Former Prisoners of War of the Soviets/
Prison Camp Conditions

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1. [redacted] one of the former prisoners of war of the Soviets. [redacted] in the attempts to indoctrinate them with Communist ideology and the extent to which the indoctrination had succeeded.

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2. [redacted] the opinion that no more than a small fraction of one per cent of former prisoners of war of the Soviets were actually influenced by the Soviet propaganda and indoctrination.

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3. [redacted] represented a rather typical example of the experiences and attitude of the returned prisoners of war.

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4. [redacted] a member of an army of approximately three hundred fifty thousand which was stationed in Latvia. When they were instructed by German authorities to lay down their arms they did so feeling that since they had not surrendered they were not prisoners of war and would be returned directly to Germany. The reverse was true and the entire group was sent into the USSR by the Soviets.

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5. [redacted] spent three years from 1945-48 at a labor camp, about one hundred miles southeast of Murmansk which was on a station of the Leningrad-Murmansk railroad. The camp contained a total of nine hundred German prisoners.

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6. They were working on construction of apartment houses and factories and [redacted] also assisted in the construction of a large melting furnace for a foundry.

7. The Soviets had a Communist indoctrination class which was known as ANTIIFA and anyone who volunteered could attend the course. Individuals who did volunteer were primarily opportunists who hoped for more food, better treatment, and quicker freedom. However, none of their hopes materialized and they were treated the same as non-members of the ANTIIFA group.

8. Of the nine hundred prisoners only 30 attended the ANTIIFA course.

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9. The lack of impression on the prisoners of the Communist propaganda was again exemplified by a group of four thousand prisoners of war who arrived in Frankfurt an der Oder from the USSR. Prior to release they were addressed by a commissar and political officer who exhorted them to disseminate what they had learned about Socialism, to describe the great reconstruction of the USSR, fight capitalism, and work for the Communist Party. 25X1
10. Many of the former prisoners of war [redacted] this type of harangue only went into one ear and out the other. Very few prisoners even listened.
11. The realities of life in the camps far outweighed any propaganda. For example, at [redacted] camp a high percentage of prisoners died. Food was very poor and in short supply. The prisoners were given a little watery soup at noon and if they completed their work norm they were given one or two pieces of bread. Upon his return to Germany (Federal Republic), [redacted] required six months of medical care before he could attempt to work. 25X1
12. He said at his camp there was one woman doctor who was not bad in her treatment of prisoners. Although there were no hospital beds available the woman doctor did grant non-work assignments to seriously ill prisoners and then granted four or five weeks easy assignments.
13. The conditions of the prisoners of war were about on a par with the natives of the area.
14. The prisoners and the civilian population actually were on pretty good terms. The civilians would frequently come alongside the barbed wire and throw in notes in which they asked for bread. On many occasions some of the prisoners who had performed over the assigned work norm did give bread to the civilians.
15. [redacted] reported that civilians performed the work norm assigned to them and not one bit more. 25X1
16. On one occasion he was watching a group of civilians unload a railroad car full of bricks. The Department of Planning had specified a definite time for unloading the cars and as a consequence the civilians unloaded the car quickly by throwing the bricks in any direction. Most of the bricks were broken. [redacted] asked a workman why they unloaded in this fashion as the bricks were not usable but the workman replied that they were ordered only to unload the car; they would not worry about the bricks.
17. This attitude was also true of some of the Soviet engineers encountered by the prisoners in connection with the construction of the big melting furnace for the foundry that [redacted] worked on. The plans furnished by the Soviet engineers were wrong and if the furnace were constructed in accordance with the plans it would not have worked. There were several German engineers who objected that the Soviet plans were wrong but the Soviet engineers in charge insisted that the furnace be constructed his way. It did not work. It was then completely rebuilt according to the German engineer's recommendations. 25X1
18. The purpose of the objections of the German engineers was to obviate being punished or accused of sabotage. Since they had registered their complaints there was no punishment.
19. [redacted] returned to Germany (Federal Republic), in 1948, he was shipped back by way of Moscow; on the main line from Moscow through Poland he observed hundreds of wood crates containing machinery which apparently had been dumped from railroad cars, and were lying in fields. The crates contained machinery from dismantled German plants. 25X1

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20. Either by neglect or by deliberate intention the railroad workers ruined most of the equipment removed from Germany. [] also saw a great amount of fine machinery standing unprotected in factory yards in the USSR. He said it was so completely rusted that it was no longer usable. 25X1
- 25X1 21. One of the former prisoners [] was an engineer from Leipzig who told me that in that city there had been one of the largest presses in the world. It had been built to stay and if dismantled it could not be rebuilt. He had given this information to a Soviet reparations crew but they were adamant and the press was dismantled and shipped. However, many boxes of parts were lost and others laid around for months before finally disappearing.
- 25X1 22. Some of the prisoners [] had actually been Communists at one time, but even these old Communists had become completely cured. [] they had once believed that the USSR was the country for workers and peasants but found this was not so. They said they definitely did not ever want to see such circumstances occur in Germany (Federal Republic). They could not swallow the deliberate killing of all individual initiative and the State taking everything the people make. They could not understand why it was a crime against the State for a starving person to take a few kernels of grain from the bottom of a train or river boat. 25X1
- 25X1 23. [] a friend of his who was a prisoner had been given 25 years of hard labor for stealing a bucket of potatoes from a field. This was a crime against the State.
24. Most prisoners in the USSR were permitted to write one postcard a month but it is believed that there are still several hundred thousand prisoners in the USSR in "silent camps" where they are not permitted to write. It is believed that these are in the atomic program area of the USSR.
- 25X1 25. In 1950 [] an article, purportedly an interview with a former German prisoner of war who escaped to India by way of Mongolia and Tibet. He allegedly had been stationed in a camp in the Tannutuva area in Siberia. He reported that high mountains encircled this area and he said that hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war are engaged in slave labor on atomic projects. He said there are underground tunnels burrowed into the sides of the mountains and completely camouflaged. He stated that the whole area is so closely guarded that it is almost impossible to escape. There has never been a case of a postcard having been received from a German prisoner of war in this area.
26. The German (Federal Republic) government has the names of 80 thousand German prisoners of war who were seen in the USSR, and reported by other prisoners. These 80 thousand are completely unaccounted for.
27. The bitterness that is felt by the overwhelming majority of former prisoners of war of the Soviets will not be erased and they will always vociferously denounce anything having to do with Communism. I cannot envision any possibility of success for the Communist Party in Germany (Federal Republic).

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